

EMERGENCE AND ANALYTICAL DUALISM¹

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1. Introduction

Whilst the reduction of the special sciences debate² rumbles on it has, at the very least, thrown up some rudimentary conclusions with respect to issues of an ontological character and an explanatory nature³. The concept of supervenience lies at the heart of these formulations⁴. Regardless of whether the unity or disunity of science is sought almost all agree that some one or other version of a supervenience relation between higher- and lower-level entities exists. And, although multiple realisation, emergent properties, or supervenient properties may (or may not) foil unity, ontological identity necessitates that ultimately the world is just made up of quantum particles. Thus, those who adhere to disunity, nevertheless, recognise that the different levels of reality are necessarily connected. For example, even if a mental qualia, such as pain, cannot be wholly reduced to a fixed set of (physical) base properties it is simply not feasible to imagine 'pain' existing without some one or other set of physical entities. Equally, whilst collectivists may claim that the whole (or the parts) of society – things we call 'structure', 'culture', 'supra-individual', etc. – is distinguishable from the people or agents that make it up they do not claim that the whole (or parts) could exist without the latter. On ontological grounds it just does not make sense to think of higher-level things in any other way.

In a previous paper (Le Boutillier, 2001), and in relation to the social sciences, I referred to this fundamental way of seeing the world as 'weak supervenience' (or the supervenience principle) or the truism of methodological individualism: no people – no society⁵. I assumed that Archer (1995: 143) and Bhaskar (1979: 37) both adhered to this view,

that it could be taken for granted in their social theories, and that Healy (1998: 515) was unduly worrying about the spectre, in Archer's version of social realism, of 'social structures wandering around by themselves like so many lost cows'. In this paper I reassess this issue directly and reconsider exactly what Archer means when she observes that the parts of society, the 'social structure' and 'Cultural System', are objective and relatively autonomous 'entities'; with, as we shall see, some apologies to Healy. For his claim that Archer's 'analytical dualism' does somehow lead to 'structures without the people who make them up' is not entirely groundless. However, the force of this point, the contravention of the exhaustion principle, does not necessarily take place in the analysis of more conventional 'social structures' (what I call morphological social kinds or social structures, see below) such as the 'demographic structure'. Morphological or social structures can be shown to possess emergent or supervenient properties⁶. And, what is more, analytical dualism, when its relationship to the 'actual' rather than the 'real' is demonstrated, can be made to conform to the aforementioned supervenience principle.

Instead, I shall claim, the main (supervenience) problem with 'analytical dualism' relates to what Archer calls the 'Cultural System'. That is, the social realm of ideas and beliefs. Unlike other social theorists involved in the 'structure-agent' debate (see especially Giddens's (1979, 1984) definition of 'rules' and 'resources') Archer does not want (all) ideas and beliefs to reside simply (that is, exclusively) in the minds of agents or actors⁷. Instead, she places a culture's stock of truth-functional ideas and beliefs into what she calls the 'propositional register' of society, *qua*, the Cultural System. The constituent bits ('truthful' – i.e. logically consistent – knowledge) of this register may pre-exist actors, are autonomous of them, and may be durable over time (see Archer, 1995: 179ff, and 1996, Chapter 5). Consequently cultural emergent properties are to be analysed in the same morphogenetic/morphostatic framework as social structural emergent properties. It is this aspect of Archer's 'parts'- 'people' account that I find most troublesome. For, as we shall see, treating ideas and beliefs as autonomous of those actors or agents who use them is likely to contravene the exhaustion principle in such a way as to make a reconciliation between analytical dualism and the supervenience principle impossible.

The paper proceeds in the following way. I will begin with a brief

exposition of Archer's account, discuss what, for the purpose of this paper, the essence of analytical dualism is and why emergence is fundamental to this approach and how it distinguishes analytical dualism from its main rivals⁸. Following this I will, after Durkheim (1982), distinguish between two types of 'social fact'. First, what I shall call morphological kinds or structures. These types are largely similar to what Archer denotes 'social structure'. The second type consists of norms, beliefs, and ideas and roughly corresponds to Archer's notion of culture (although not her 'Cultural System'). After analysing Archer's claims concerning the generative powers of both 'social emergent properties' and 'cultural emergent properties' (that which makes her structures 'real') in relation to the supervenience principle I conclude with an account of the cultural realm that borrows heavily from R.M. Hare's (1952) attempts to overcome the 'naturalistic fallacy'.

2. The Morphogenetic Approach

Margaret Archer's version of social realism, the theory of analytical dualism, is consistently and clearly set out in her numerous publications (see Archer, 1995, 1996a, 2000⁹). In these works there is one primary goal. Following Lockwood's (1964) seminal paper on the subject, Archer attempts to draw an ontological distinction between the 'parts' and 'people' of society, *qua*, 'analytical dualism'. Like Bhaskar (1978, 1991), Sayer (1992), and other social realists, this entails the development of an irreducible account of the 'social' whilst at one and the same time capturing the essence of the human condition to feel both constraint and freedom. The latter, at least in the context of this paper, represents the easier part of her task. Freedom can be elided to by reference to the open nature of society¹⁰ or the emergence of new 'structural' arrangements ('structural elaboration') or cultural variants ('cultural elaboration') in society. However, freedom and structural change is given ultimate force, in Archers's account, by the individuation of the 'self': a distinct, separate, but socially conditioned person (Adam is an 'agent' prior to being an 'actor'). Thus, Archer observes

One of our fundamental human potentials is also the source of the typically human predicament: *homo sapiens* has an imagination which

can succeed in over-reaching their animal status ... One crucial implication of this creativity is that human beings have the unique potential to conceive of new social forms. Because of this, society can never be held to shape them entirely since the very shaping of society itself is due to them being the kind of beings who can envisage their own social forms (1995: 289).¹¹

Juxtaposing this sense of the 'self' (intertwined in and through social interaction) is a stratified array of irreducible social entities that are classified in terms of the 'parts' and 'people' of society: the social structural; the Cultural System; agents ('corporate' and 'primary'); and actors. All are 'real' in the sense of existing (within the analytical dual of the social world) in their own right. That is, in the important sense of having both emergent properties and being temporally distinct from one another (relatively enduring despite the best efforts of agents). Thus, according to Archer (1995: 65ff.), analytical dualism is based on two premises:

- (i) The social world is stratified, such that the emergent properties of structures and agents are irreducible to one another, meaning that in principle they are analytically separable
- (ii) [Given that] structures and agents are also temporally distinguishable (... it is justifiable and feasible to talk of pre-existence and posteriority when dealing with specific instances of the two), and this can be used methodologically in order to examine the interplay between them and thus explain changes in both – over time

These features, according to Archer, lead to the avoidance of excessive voluntarism and unwarranted determinism and allow for a clear distinction between analytical dualism and Giddens's (1979, 1984, 1991) structuration theory. For, within this model it can be shown that social structures emerge (structural or cultural elaboration) through social interaction but also that constraints, via lingering structural properties, proliferate within society. The last point is significant. For, according to Archer, some structures despite the best intentions of actors simply resist change. For example, the top-heavy demographic structure, the education system of post-Revolutionary Cubans, or, the totalitarian political systems of communist regimes.

It is structural emergence or the notion of 'emergent properties' which supplies Archer with a base for a realist ontology and rules out, by

definition, the claim that social structures are ‘virtual’ or mere memory traces (see Giddens, 1979, 1984, 1991)¹². Emergence, as Archer (1995: 66) notes, ‘means that the two [‘structure’ and ‘agent’] are analytically separable, but also since given ‘structures’ and ‘agents’ occupy and operate over different tracts of the time dimension they therefore are distinguishable from each other’.

As such, emergence is of primary ontological importance. Without it it would be impossible to justify not only the ‘reality’ of structure but also the relative autonomy of structure, structural elaboration, and structural constraint. Emergence also supplies the realist with a way of talking about social structures without implying reification (of the social world). It was this fear, Archer claims, that prevented collectivists such as Gellner (1971) and Lockwood (1964) taking the leap from methodologically indispensable ‘structures’ to ontologically real ‘structures’. Hence, a realist ontology:

furnishes that which collectivism lacked – an activity-dependent concept of structure, which is both genuinely irreducible yet in no danger of hypostatization, and a non-atomistic conception of agents, to rectify the deficiencies of Individualism’s individual – without, however, regarding the two elements as part of an inseparable ‘duality’. (Archer, 1996b: 691)

With this brief summary of Archer’s account we can begin to assess the ontological validity of Archer’s distinction between ‘structure’ and ‘agent’ and its reliance upon emergent/ supervenient properties. I will do this in the following way. First, like Archer, and many others beside, I will divide social facts (‘structures’) into two kinds. Roughly, following Durkheim (1982) we might call these morphological kinds and cultural kinds. The latter approximates to what Durkheim called the ‘*conscience collective*’. I will then consider the validity, given my prior adherence to ‘weak’ or ‘dependence’ supervenience, of maintaining that these kinds have emergent properties and may therefore exist with relative causal autonomy from those lower-level entities that serve to compose the thing itself. But first a word on the reduction debate.

3. Social Kinds

Central to any exposition of social supervenience or the reduction of the social sciences is the question of what kinds of things we are referring to when we talk of different levels or strata of reality. The reductionist cannot begin to talk of type-type reductions whilst the non-reductionist cannot talk of the multiple realisation of supervenient entities unless there exists some clearly defined notion of what social supervenient types we are talking about. Conceptually, there often appears to be something of a muddle surrounding what is and what is not to count as a higher level phenomenon. Sometimes the higher level consists of beliefs, values, ideas, roles, rules and other products of socialisation whilst at other times it is resource distribution (inflation, employment, age, and so forth) which authors are referring to. The fact that the two classes are fundamentally different, and may imply something different in terms of either reduction or 'structure' is usually passed over.

This occurs on both sides of the debate. On the one hand, Mellor (1982), for example, believes the reduction of sociology to psychology straightforward but in the process of reducing he frequently conflates psychological dispositions with what are quite clearly cultural features of a society. Smith (1992), although he rightly acknowledges the incompatible taxonomies of neuroscience and what he calls 'common-sense psychology', seems not to want to even mention sociological types in his discussion despite referring to events that are social or cultural in character¹³. On the other hand, non-reductionists such as Kincaid (1994) and Jackson and Pettit (1992a, 1992b) often invoke examples of both morphological and cultural kinds to refute explanatory reduction with little or no reference to the fact that these types are fundamentally different and may, as such, reduce (or not reduce) in different ways¹⁴. I have no gripe with any of these authors I just think it would be helpful to spell out the differences between the two more clearly rather than making vague references to 'social context', 'folk psychology', or 'cultural context'.

I think Durkheim's (1982) distinction between social facts in *The Rules of Sociological Method* might be helpful in this respect. Durkheim distinguishes between three types of social facts: morphological or anatomical facts, institutional norms, and non-institutional norms. For the purposes of this paper, it does no harm to the essence of the institutional

and non-institutional types (those norms and values that pertain to socialisation/interaction) to conflate them into one category: namely 'cultural' types¹⁵. And, to signify that these facts are properties of a group or society we might re-name them, for the time being, 'structures'. Let us call these social kinds 'morphological structures' and 'cultural structures'. Following Durkheim, 'morphological structures' may account for:

the number and nature of the elementary parts which constitute society, the way in which they are articulated, the degree of coalescence they have attained, the distribution of population over the earth's surface, the extent and nature of the network of communications, the design of dwellings, etc. (Durkheim, 1982: 57)

A definition of this form requires some qualification. Most notably I do not mean to include mere taxonomic collectives or artificial constructs. Thus, like Archer, I am proposing that when we talk of (morphological) structures we are referring to 'entities' which are not merely products of the sociologist's classification methods. Also, I think that this 'morphological structure' is more or less consistent with what Archer describes as 'social structure'.

The second type of 'structure', Durkheim's *conscience collective*, I will define in a relatively straightforward manner – i.e. without delving into the depths of meaning, interpretation, and understanding – as shared ideas and beliefs that are not just common to some social group, that we might label a 'culture', but are a prerequisite for social interaction (and in many ways social integration). As numerous commentators in the social phenomenological or post-Wittgenstein traditions have observed, such beliefs and ideas are clearly not psychological dispositions¹⁶.

Now it is my contention that discussions about reduction, emergent properties, and supervenience relations have generally failed, or not considered it necessary to that debate, to disentangle these two types. I should stress that for the reduction debate, other than clarity, it has little bearing. That is, provided that it can be demonstrated that at least one of these social kinds is not reducible, which is relatively simple, the non-reductionist will win. However, the implications for social theory, and social explanation, are fundamental. For, although the two types may play an equally important role in explanation, when we observe the two

types separately (which in social research it is often difficult if not impossible to do) it will become clear that something very different (in terms of reduction, structure, or supervenience) is happening in one case to that which is happening in the other. To demonstrate this we need first to return to the notion of emergence.

4. Emergence and Morphological Kinds

It is generally noted by ‘collectivists’ that the reason why we cannot reduce social phenomena to psychological phenomena is because at the higher level there exist (‘causally’ significant) emergent properties which cannot be captured by the parts or atoms of the lower level. Social theoretical emergentism, in full flow, often makes this claim by way of analogy to properties in nature or the physical realm. Durkheim proceeded in just this way:

Whenever elements of any kind combine, by virtue of this combination they give rise to new phenomena. One is therefore forced to conceive of these phenomena as residing, not in the elements, but in the entity formed by the union of these elements ... The hardness of bronze lies neither in the copper, nor in the tin, nor in the lead which have been used to form it, which are all soft or malleable bodies. The hardness arises from the mixing of them. The liquidity of water, its sustaining and other properties, are not in the two gases of which it is composed, but in the complex substance which they form by coming together. (1982: 39)¹⁷.

Durkheim thought this analogy to be sufficiently obvious to rest his case that social reality must be viewed as distinct, indeed *sui generis*, of individuals¹⁸. In this sense, as Lukes (1973: 16) observes, ‘he was a good disciple of Comte’. However, the analogy is frequently repeated by contemporary critical realists. Following Bhaskar’s commitment to emergence, Archer (1995: 50) observes that ‘it is nonsense to discuss whether something (like water) is more real than something else (like hydrogen and oxygen)’. She then, approvingly, quotes Sayer (1992: 119) who, borrowing another analogy from Durkheim, observes that we would not try to explain the power of people by reference to the cells that make them up ‘as if cells possessed this power too. [And again] Nor would we

explain the power of water to extinguish fire by deriving it from the powers of its constituents, for oxygen and hydrogen are highly inflammable' (cf. Archer, 1995: 51). Clearly, it must be admitted, that water, bronze, persons, and so forth, all lie in some obvious supervenience relation with the constituent parts that make them up. The fundamental question for social realism is how useful might such analogies be for the society-individual relation?

On the one hand the analogy works well. When we apply it to 'morphological' kinds the lower-level/ upper-level relation is not only clear but it becomes quite obvious that, because of emergence, neither sociology nor economics can be reduced to psychology. Archer, herself, provides a simple but powerful example of this in a reference to group behaviour (and its effects), where she comments:

Whether or not the emergent factor, which now has to be incorporated if the explanation is to work, happens to look innocuously individualistic (like 'fear of large groups', which makes the difference between small talkative seminars and the silence which ensues when the same people are asked to comment during a lecture), the fact remains that it has come into play and is identifiable only in the new context of the lecture itself. (1995: 69)

In cases like this something may be said to be effecting the agent's actions by dint of numbers, distribution, and relation. And, in each case this can be clearly seen by plotting subvenient and supervenient entities. Consequently, the ontological status of the higher-level phenomenon is maintained and there is no need to slip into the realms of mystery to explain the events happening. At the same time those who advocate the necessity of higher-level properties for explanation (the irreducibility of the social or economic) are vindicated by the incorporation of emergent properties in their various explanantia. So, for example, the 'generative powers'¹⁹ of a demographic structure, *inter alia*, may prevent or enable the output of a generous pensions policy or military recruitment for a standing army. And, consequently, reference to emergent entities or features is not just warranted but of necessity in any explanation of such events.

Although not unproblematic for social (and economic) analysis²⁰ Durkheim's analogies with natural kinds do seem to correspond with

morphological social kinds. The only problem that remains for the analytical dualist is how to reconcile the claim that (morphological) structures may be relatively enduring – resisting change or constraining actors – with the fact that they are wholly dependent upon their subvenient or base properties. This is not an easy situation to deal with but I think, by dint of contextualising the ‘actual’ within the ‘real’, analytical dualism can be shown to be consistent with the supervenience principle; at least in the context of morphological/ social structures.

For Archer ‘structures’ (social, cultural, or agential) are relatively autonomous in the sense of existing independently of lower level entities. As noted, this point is central to understanding structural elaboration and constraint. Structures precede action and may, on occasions, resist change. In one important way this seems to rule out correspondence to a conventional supervenient-subvenient relation. For it seems, as Healy (1998) noted, that the social structure is out of kilter with the present; that is, it does not correspond or depend upon the present-tense actors that most of us would assume make it what it is. And yet, since Parsons (1968) at least, we are aware that emergent things exist only by virtue of the things that make them up²¹. Why then does Archer’s account *appear* to breach the fundamental ontological principle of supervenient-subvenient relations? The answer lies in her rejection, following Bhaskar (1978) of ‘actualism’; the view that real things have actual substance. Instead, when Archer talks of structures she is primarily interested in their ‘generative causal powers’. It is these powers or properties that provide the thing with a ‘real’, as opposed to ‘actual’, existence. Thus, in a social realist sense something like water might be said to be both ‘real’ and ‘actual’. It is ‘actual’ in the sense of being what it is and ‘real’ in the sense of having properties that make it useful, for example, to put out fires. Similarly, the demographic structure is ‘actual’ (through natural necessity) but ‘real’, in a social realist’s sense, of having the generative power to prevent (or enable) a generous pensions policy. Hence, ‘[t]he crucial distinguishing property is that X itself [an emergent property], and itself being a relational property, has the generative capacity to modify the powers of its constituents in fundamental ways and to exercise causal influence *sui generis*’.

So, when Archer talks about morphostasis and/or morphogenesis it is always in this ‘real’, as opposed to ‘actual’ sense i.e. in the context of ‘generative powers’. In this way, provided we do not confuse ‘real’

with ‘actual’ it is open to us, in principle at least, to reconfigure Archer’s demographic structure so as to make it, in an ‘actual’ sense consistent with conventional supervenient-subvenient relations; it is just a case of translating what is happening in the ‘actual’ from what is happening in the ‘real’.

When Archer refers to something like a top-heavy demographic structure preventing something else like a generous pensions policy (or effective military recruitment) taking place it is clear that she is not talking not of the ‘actual’ thing (the demographic structure) but of how the demographic structure *really* effects other things. The demographic structure would indeed need to change significantly in order to fulfil the goal of a generous pensions policy and its failure to do this is not indicative of ‘actual’ morphostasis (which is hardly likely for such a structure) but, more accurately, a failure to change or elaborate to a state that may accommodate a generous pensions policy. Not only does this avoid the problem of ‘structures without people’ but it also highlights – given that all actual morphological types are dependent on populations – that ‘actual’ morphostasis is in fact a rare state²².

5. Emergence and Cultural Systems

However, emergence in the arena of beliefs or ideas is, so to speak, a different kettle of fish. The constituent elements, the people, appear to lie in a quite different relationship to the ‘part’ that Archer and others refer to as the Cultural System. This is not to say that morphological features will not be a part of that existence or that our explanations and understandings of why certain individuals hold particular ideas or beliefs (why police officers at training colleges assimilate ‘cop-culture’ views, why individuals get carried away in crowds, why totalitarian regimes persist, etc.). But there does appear to be a fundamental difference here. The difference is that it looks as if the supervenience relation is simply that of identity or co-variance. By which I mean to say: what is held to be supervenient for a culture is just equal to the sum of knowledge of the subvenient entities (the people)²³.

Archer, of course, would deny many of these points and would be especially indignant with the assertion that the Cultural System is nothing more than an aggregate of ‘cultured’ individuals’ knowledge. Given her

reliance on emergence and her claim that the social emergent properties and cultural emergent properties are to be treated the same it is worth considering how she justifies the idea of an autonomous and objective Cultural System. She begins by drawing a clear distinction between what she calls the Cultural System and Socio-Cultural Interaction. The Cultural System is an emergent entity, it emerges from Socio-Cultural Interaction but once emerged it has, according to Archer, an objective existence. It contains a culture's entire stock of knowledge (in propositional form) and this knowledge (theories, beliefs, values) stand in some logical relationship to one another; which means, they must adhere to the law of non-contradiction. Such knowledge includes not only what is known to present-tense actors but what has emerged, generation-after-generation through interaction. Archer (1996a: 108) notes, for example, 'as a CEP [cultural emergent property], a soufflé recipe might not have been used by anyone living, but would still work for the cook who eventually tried it'. Furthermore,

If we think of culture then all knowledge was certainly activity dependent for its genesis and elaboration. Nevertheless, once recorded (chiselled into runes or gathering dust in the British Museum), it constitutes knowledge without a current knowing subject. It is knowledge because it retains the dispositional character to be understood, though it persists unrecognised, sustaining *potential powers* (of contradiction and complementarity with other cultural items) which remain unexercised (My emphases, Archer, 1995: 144).

This is an extremely contentious claim. For, to conceive of the Cultural System in this manner appears to make no explanatory, causal, or ultimately ontological sense. In terms of explanation and causation the vast majority of what belongs to the Cultural System is, and always will be, redundant. Perhaps we can live with this, but from an ontological perspective by insisting that knowledge and beliefs can somehow exist 'behind the backs' of the people (in emergent form) Archer has not only contravened the exhaustion principle but rules out, in this sphere at least, any correspondence to a regular supervenient-subvenient relationship between 'part' and 'people'. Although Archer is consistent in her use of emergence or emergent properties her extension of its application to the sphere of beliefs and ideas highlights a fundamental problem with her version of realism. This relates directly to her application of the

‘generative power’ or ‘potential’ of a thing.

In the case of the demographic structure the potential of its emergent property, its top-heavy nature, was considered sufficient (presumably in an INUS fashion, see Mackie, 1974) to explain why a generous pensions policy might not be forthcoming should some governmental agent(s) choose to recommend one. As such it could be applied or be seen to be relevant to the ‘actual’ world. However, it is clear that in the case of unknown beliefs and unknown ideas we cannot even begin to apply these to the ‘actual’ world and by defining these things as belonging to the ‘real world’ the ‘real world’ loses touch with the ‘actual world’. But the source of the problem, I think, relates to Archer’s definition of potential or generative powers. All kinds of things, too many, may possess this quality and by allowing all such potentialities into our frame of reference, by classifying them as emergent properties, our list of real things would quickly resemble infinity. The most logical way around this problem is to define ‘potential’ in accordance with actual potential rather than a potential that requires some additional yet unknown and possibly unlikely act.

Indeed Archer’s definition of potential or generative power resembles claims made by pro-life supporters, in the debate surrounding abortion, that an *in vitro* embryo is a ‘potential person’. In some sort of abstract way it is but the point is, as Nuttall (1993) observes, it requires an actual intervention in order to become a ‘potential person’, i.e. an act to transform it into an *in vivo* embryo. Otherwise it is spurious to talk of the thing as a ‘potential person’, for logically, we would have to accept that spermatozoa and ovum are also potential persons. The ethical consequences of doing this would obviously be profound. The similarity with the forgotten ‘chiselled runes’ or the soufflé recipe is clear to see: some sort of direct, and not necessarily forthcoming, intervention in the shape of the discovery of these artefacts is required in order to supply them with actual potential²⁴. Given these failings in Archer’s account it may be asked whether beliefs and ideas can be accounted for in terms of ontological supervenience relations without the spectre of so many cultural structures floating around un-tethered to their base properties. In answering this question in the affirmative my response, I admit, is both partial and tentative. However, I think that R.M. Hare’s use of (co-variance) supervenience may carry us some of the way towards understanding the nature of ideas and beliefs in relation to groups and

cultures²⁵.

6. Value Supervenience

As noted previously (see Le Boutillier, 2001) Hare's intention when he used the notion of supervenience in *The Language of Morals* was to overcome the naturalistic fallacy that 'good' could be reduced to the characteristics of a thing, event, action, or person. Hare provides plenty of useful demonstrations (both moral and non-moral) of the absurd consequence of using 'good' in this way. For example, if when talking of strawberries we reduce 'good' to the attributes of being 'sweet, juicy, firm, red, and large' it becomes impossible to say such things as 'this strawberry is good because it is sweet' because this would be the same as saying 'this strawberry is good because it is good'. The reduction of 'good' in this way deprives us of what Hare calls its 'value usage' (its function to commend or do the opposite). His solution is to observe the supervenient relation between the 'good' (strawberry, picture, person, etc.) and the subvenient characteristics of the thing we call good ('firm ... sweet'; 'composition, ... admiration by members of the Royal Academy'; 'benevolence ...honesty'; respectively).

Although at first sight this may appear to be rather deterministic there is no reason why we should not allow the subvenient characters of what constitutes a good strawberry, picture, or person to change over time and between people and places. Indeed, other than the fact that we wish to prevent social structures wandering around behind our backs and we do not want to endow them with mysterious rational or logical qualities, value supervenience does have some similarities with Archer's model of the Cultural –System. For Archer, the governing or supervening principle of the Cultural System was logical relations. Hence, the claim that 'culture as a whole is taken to refer to all intelligibilia, that is to any item which has the dispositional capacity of being understood by someone. Within this, the CS is distinguished as that sub-set of items to which the law of non-contradiction can be applied' (Archer, 1995: 180)²⁶. Hare's supervenient realm is broader, not only does it include 'good' in both its moral and non-moral sense but he further observes that many words are commending (valuing) in some way, most obviously, 'right' and 'ought' (words used for instruction or guidance).

It also seems to me that the supervenient character of 'value' can be mapped on to our understanding of cultures, both our own and others, with far more fecundity than reducing shared ideas to a logical formula of what, under these auspices, counts as 'cultural knowledge' and what doesn't. Indeed it seems quite consistent with Rom Harré's (1981) epistemological or methodological notions of 'competence' and 'performance'. Where 'competence' refers to a corpus of knowledge that members of a group 'have to be able to act in ways recognisably appropriate to, and constitutive of, the collectivities to which they belong' (1981: 152). And, 'performance' refers to how, on given occasions, an actor draws on the corpus of knowledge relevant to a particular occasion. Although both terms clearly refer to value-orientation, it is, as Harré observes, in a methodological sense, 'competence' (where value/instruction supervene) that most interests the sociologist. Although it is, of course, through performance, possibly something similar to Aristotle's *phrônesis*, that the subvenient characteristics of valued things are configured and reconfigured. Observing values as supervening on things is also consistent with the interpretation and understanding of people and cultures who hold different beliefs to our own. For although we may often disagree in terms of what makes a thing *good* or makes an action the *right* thing to do we can, with some little effort (and we do it all the time) understand when something is being commended, or the opposite.

7. Conclusion

Regardless of the conclusions I have drawn methodological individualism remains an inadequate alternative to collectivism. This follows from two facts. First, emergence, at a higher level than the individual, can and has been shown to be present in the shape of morphological structures. Second, methodological individualism (or reduction) of the types advocated by Watkins (1971), Mellor (1982), or even rational choice theorists, seems equally moribund by the non-psychological character of a culture's ideas and beliefs. However, just how a collectivist or non-reductionist approach deals with culture remains an open question, and a question that warrants serious attention for good reason. For, whilst morphological structures and psychological dispositions may be of

absolute relevance to social scientific investigation or explanation some subjects – sociology, social anthropology, and history – rely heavily on the discovery of, and incorporation into explanation, of ‘cultural facts’. It is these social kinds that most often play the major role in social explanations. Take, for example, Jackson and Pettit’s (1993a) claim that (the higher-level macro- phenomenon) observation that an increase in unemployment may explain a co-occurring increase in crime. Indeed, in an INUS sense (see Mackie, 1993) it does. But, stated alone, as the explanation (with motive and desire conjoined to it) it resembles what Hempel (1993) described as an ‘elliptic explanation’. It is of this variety because the sociologist’s ‘why questions’ are almost always answered through a frame of reference that includes cultural kinds. We may begin with unemployment but we end with an array of cultural why questions: How did unemployment feed into an individual’s sense of ‘masculinity’? How did values alter within the ‘youth culture’? Answering such questions tells us not only why some unemployed individuals turned to crime but why other unemployed individuals (an important contrast class) did not.

Finally, I should stress that I do not think Archer was entirely wrong to place so much emphasis upon the importance of truth and falsity and the logical ordering of ideas. Where she fails, in my view, is in her assumption that such an ordering could take place in any other place than the mind of an individual. This is surprising given Archer’s rebuke of Durkheim and Mauss’s (1963) social Kantianism (see footnote 11) for what she has done seems to me to be little better. However, this does not mean that we should abandon realism in this area in total but perhaps limit it to its proper sites: in ‘the self’ and ‘the other’ and the social interaction which takes place when the two meet. Thus, I have in mind something like Christine Korsgaard’s (1996: 166) response to Mackie’s deliberations on the issue of realism: ‘[i]t is the most familiar fact of human life that the world contains entities that can tell us what to do and make us do it. They are people, and other animals.’

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NOTES

1. I am particularly indebted to Liz Bradbury, Claudia Schneider, and Jeroen Van Bouwel for reading and commenting on earlier versions of this paper. The faults contained in the paper are mine alone.
2. We can distinguish between the 'disunity or unity of the special sciences' claims on the one hand (amongst others, see Fodor, 1994, Jackson and Pettit, 1992a, 1992b, Pettit, 1993, and the collection of essays in Charles and Lennon (eds), 1992) and cross-cutting or closely related 'methodological individualism versus collectivism' claims on the other hand (amongst many others, see Watkins, 1971, Brodbeck, 1971, Kincaid, 1994 & 1996).
3. Of course, often, if not always, ontological problems underlie explanation problems and the two are inescapably linked. Of the most interesting problems to arise in reduction is that of causal over-determination. Given that we accept that there are different levels of reality it becomes hard to avoid over-determination in our explanation frameworks. In my view Jackson and Pettit's (1992a & 1992b) explanatory ecumenism provides a sound solution to this problem.
4. Supervenience may be presented in a number of ways (see Kim, 1993). I am referring to the straightforward and uncontroversial dependence relation between two related levels of reality e.g. the mental is dependent on the physical.
5. Which can be derived from the exhaustion principle: 'individuals exhaust the social world in that every entity in the social realm is either an individual or a sum of such individuals' (Kincaid, 1994: 499).
6. And the fact that they do will defeat those, like Watkins (1968) and Mellor (1982), who wished to reduce sociology to psychology in Nagel's (1961) terms.
7. However, the fact that she excludes non-propositional ideas and beliefs from her Cultural System suggests that her approach may be closer to some of those 'central conflationists' she critiques.
8. Giddens (1979, 1984, 1991) and Bauman (1973) are the main contenders. Both of whom, according to Archer commit the error, in relation to structure/culture-agent relations, of central conflation or elision i.e. clamping 'structure' and 'agent' together. In her *Realist Social Theory* it is Giddens alone, and other structuration theorists, that take most of the pounding. In *Culture and Agency*, Archer turns her attention to Bauman's early work where she claims he commits the same central conflation error

as Giddens through the ‘simultaneity’ of the ‘Socio-Cultural level’ and the ‘Cultural System level’. Thus, ‘the Socio-Cultural level and the Cultural System level are elided, for at any moment in time the formulation $CS \Leftrightarrow S-C$ holds good. It is this formula, according to Archer, which essentially unites the theories of Bauman and Giddens’ (Archer, 1995: 78).

9. For clarity I will focus mainly on her *Realist Social Theory: the morphogenetic approach*. This text is perhaps the clearest and most comprehensive of her trilogy i.e. it contains considerable reference and content on ‘social structure’, ‘cultural system’, and ‘agency’.
10. See Bhaskar (1978, Chapter 2).
11. Archer’s account of the individuated self is clearly dependent upon both Aristotelian notions of identity and a Kantian or transcendental notion of reality. With regard to the former she stresses the importance of personal identity and a continued sense of the self (reminiscent of both MacIntyre (1981) and Williams (1973)). With regard to the latter she rebukes Durkheim and Mauss (1963) for attempting to give primacy to the social classification of humankind. Their argument, she claims, is circular for to contend that ‘the classification of things reproduces the classification men’ confuses ‘the capacities of the (human) mind with its (social) contents’. Consequently, as Kant observed, the transcendental unity of apperception is necessarily prior to social classification: ‘before we can receive particular concepts of self from our society, we have to be the kind of (human) being who can master social concepts’ (see Archer, 1995: 285-6).
12. A paragraph from Giddens’s *Central Problems in Social Theory*, draws out the stark contrast, due to emergence, between analytical dualism and structuration theory. Giddens (1979: 64) observes:

“As I shall employ it, ‘structure’ refers to ‘structural property’, or more exactly, to ‘structuring property’, structuring properties providing the ‘binding’ of time and space in social systems. I argue that these properties can be understood as rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structures exist paradigmatically, as an absent set of differences, temporally ‘present’ only in their instantiation, in the constituting moments of social systems. To regard structure as involving ‘virtual order’ of differences, as I have already indicated, ... implies recognising the existence of: (a) knowledge – as memory traces – of ‘how things are to be done’ (said, written), on the part of social actors; (b) social practices organised through the recursive mobilisation of that knowledge; (c) capabilities that the production of those practices presupposes.”

13. Hence,

“Since neuroscience is simply blind to the taxonomies involved in the explanations of common-sense psychology, it cannot hope to explain, for example, why Alice wrote a cheque, rather than paid cash or used a credit card; it can only yield explanations of (say) why Alice’s fingers moved in these trajectories rather than those.” (Smith, 1992: 22-3)
14. It is perhaps not their job to make this distinction count in terms of reduction. These authors do distinguish between types of ‘structural explanation’ and their separate usefulness in terms of explaining events. My point is that the two types, social and cultural, are certainly very different in kind and as such, in terms of reduction, this difference warrants exploration.
15. Together they make up Durkheim’s *conscience collective*.
16. Geertz (1994: 219) sums this up beautifully when he observes

“The generalized attacks on privacy theories of meaning is, since early Husserl and late Wittgenstein, so much a part of modern thought that it need not be developed once more here. What is necessary ... and in particular ... made clear that to say that culture consists of socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people do such things as signal conspiracies and join them or perceive insults and answer them, is no more to say that it is a psychological phenomenon, a characteristic of someone’s mind, personality, cognitive structure, or whatever, than to say that Tantrism, genetics, the progressive form of the verb, the classification of wines, the Common Law, or the notion of ‘a conditional curse...’ is.”
17. Interestingly, G.H. Mead (1938: 641 & 1934: 329) repeats this analogy in *The Philosophy of the Act and Mind, Self and Society*.
18. “society is not a mere sum of individuals; rather the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics’ and it was ‘in the nature of this individuality, not in that of its component units, that one must seek the immediate and determining causes of the facts appearing there”, see Lukes (1973: 19).
19. It is important to clarify the meaning and implications of this term, which I will do shortly.
20. As Giddens (1984: 171-2) observes:

“Social systems do have structural properties that cannot be described in terms of concepts referring to the consciousness of agents. But human actors, as recognizable ‘competent agents’, do not exist in separation from one another as copper, tin and lead do. They do not come together *ex nihilo* to form a new entity by their fusion or association. Durkheim here confuses

a hypothetical conception of individuals in a state of nature (untainted by association with others) and real processes of social reproduction.”

Much economic explanation/ prediction seems to be of a morphological type conjoined with rational choice theory. The latter, according to Archer (2000, see Chapter 2) when applied to the social strips agency of its normative and emotional content.

21. This point was made clear in Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action*. In reviewing Durkheim's work, Parsons (1968: 35-6) observed:

“Those features of organic systems which are emergent at any given level of the complexity of systems cannot, by definition, exist concretely apart from the relevant combinations of the more elementary units of the systems. They cannot be isolated, even conceptually, from these more elementary units in the sense of being thought of as existing independently ... They have in common with elements such as mass the fact that the conception of ‘existing by themselves’ [sui generis] is non-sensical.”
22. I presume that I have interpreted Archer's thesis correctly. If I have it does raise some methodological and explanatory questions. Presumably, and at an epistemological level, Archer would want to claim that an explanation of why the demographic structure, *inter alia*, prevents a generous pensions policy would contain a description of the ‘actual’ as well as the ‘real’ as well as a ‘contrast’ (Van Fraassen, 1980). But, perhaps these are implied at the level of explanation.
23. This would make it consistent with some kind of methodological individualist theory. Although not of the kind that reduces the agent to a bundle of psychological dispositions with rational motives. For it must be admitted that what is cultural may elide with these but certainly is not identical.
24. Clearly, no such intervention was required in the case of the demographic structure. The generative power was already in place.
25. It should be noted from the start that the kind of supervenience relation Hare refers to is, in its reference to values or prescriptions, dissimilar to other uses of this term. It refers to covariant symmetrical relations.
26. But, consequently non-propositional ideas and beliefs (including myths, mysteries, tastes, prejudices, affinities, and animosities) are pushed into the causal realm of socio-cultural interaction. This is a strange way of distinguishing between ideas and beliefs which prohibits – for both the subject of research and the researcher – a logical/rational interpretation of prejudice and myth.

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